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CALFED Bay-Delta Program

May 22, 2000

The Honorable Bruce Babbitt
Secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior
18th & C Streets, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Babbitt:

I would like to echo some of the concerns that Senator Boxer expressed in her May 10, 2000, letter to you regarding the CALFED discussions between the State of California and the Department of Interior.

Senator Boxer raised three concerns in her letter regarding (1) full funding for water use efficiency and recycling; (2) certainty and stability for environmental restoration and (3) compliance with existing environmental laws. The Santa Clara Valley Water District (District) shares her concerns and supports the goal of restoring the Bay-Delta ecosystem to a healthy, functioning system.

We believe the four goals of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program can only be accomplished through a sustained level of broad-based funding. The District and other urban water agencies support the water use efficiency program proposed by CALFED. We have reached tentative agreement on the proposed urban Best Management Practices certification program. The District, as a signatory to the Memorandum of Understanding regarding urban water conservation in California and as a Central Valley Project contractor, has invested \$31 million since 1991 in our local conservation programs. In addition, the District and other South Bay cities invested \$140 million in Phase I of the South Bay Recycling Program. The District's Integrated Water Resource Plan includes the development of additional conservation and recycling programs as part of the strategy to meet future demand. However, we believe that additional state and federal funds are necessary to augment local funds in order to accomplish the ambitious conservation and recycling goals prescribed by CALFED.

Similarly, sustained broad-based funding which includes state and federal funds and user fees are necessary to implement CALFED's ecosystem restoration program and the proposed environmental water account. The District contributed \$1 million in the early stages of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program to help jump-start its ecosystem restoration program. As a Central Valley Project M&I contractor, the District has been contributing over \$1 million per year towards the Restoration Fund established by the Central Valley Project Improvement Act (CVPIA). We are extremely interested in your help to ensure that these local contributions are used appropriately and effectively for their intended purposes and that maximum coordination and integration occur among these programs with similar environmental objectives.

I would like to use this opportunity to restate our support for the environmental objectives of CVPIA and other existing environmental laws. We believe that a healthy, functioning Bay-Delta ecosystem is the key to providing improved water supply reliability and quality for all beneficial uses. However, I would also point out that existing environmental laws, policies and agreements recognize the similarity and overlapping purposes of many of the environmental programs and seek to maximize benefits and synergy through coordinated implementation of these programs. An example is the crediting of flow contributed by the Central Valley Project (CVP) to meet the 1995 Bay Delta Water Quality Control Plan towards the

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CVP obligation under Section 3406 b(2) of the CVPIA. This crediting policy is memorialized in the December 1994 Bay-Delta Accord and needs to be upheld. Another example is CALFED Bay-Delta Program's adopted policy of integrating its ecosystem restoration program's flow acquisition with those under CVPIA's Anadromous Fish Restoration Program to avoid duplication of efforts.

Furthermore, the restoration of the Bay-Delta ecosystem will require a comprehensive program of flow and nonflow measures to maximize effectiveness. The Bay-Delta ecosystem is a highly altered system and is continuing to be altered through land-use changes and introduced species. CALFED's science panel and many other leading scientists and experts advocate that habitat restoration, removal of barriers, screening and other actions to address direct mortality, along with actions to address introduced species are equally, if not more important, than flow.

I think you would agree that resolving the Bay-Delta issues requires balanced policies to achieve environmental, water supply and water quality objectives. No one would like to repeat the disaster in December 1999 when salinity in Delta supplies tripled over a 2-week period for a very minimal return in environmental protection.

Santa Clara County, which includes Silicon Valley, values clean, safe water in our creeks and bays and in our water supply. The District, as the water resource management agency for the county, seeks to provide value in a practical, cost-effective and environmentally-sensitive manner. I appreciate your efforts in continuing to protect the economic vitality of the region and the state.

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY

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